

For a sustainable operation, to protect children's lives,
and for their future independence
- Small Farm project planned by Ban Rom Sai -

It has been 11 years since Ban Rom Sai was established. There have been no child deaths since we adopted Anti-HIV therapy in 2002. Today, all 30 children of Ban Rom Sai are healthy and growing up quickly. Now that health is no longer an issue, we believe that our next mission is to help the children find a vocation, develop a skill that will let them earn a living and eventually allow them to leave Ban Rom Sai. However, in addition to discrimination arising from their HIV/AIDS status, the children of Ban Rom Sai also face the following challenges:

- **Ability to pay for medication that they have to take for the rest of their lives**

Due to the nature of HIV medication, children will continue to have to seek new drugs, as the efficacy of the old drugs wears off. Switching to newer drugs is costly. New HIV medication currently cost around 70,000~120,000 Yen per month (US\$850-1,500). Taking into consideration that the average monthly income for Northern Thais is 30,000~40,000 Yen (US\$350-490), this is a substantial expenditure.

- **Some children face learning difficulties and hyperactivity problems**

The children at Ban Rom Sai are the first generation of children growing up with HIV/AIDS transmitted from their mothers. In this respect, these children are living unprecedented lives. Initially there were no HIV/AIDS medications for children and we believe that some of the learning and hyperactivity problems the children are facing today, could be due to adverse effects from strong medications taken early on in their treatment. There is therefore no cure. For these children to become financially independent is going to be extremely challenging.

- **Education costs increase, as the children grow up**

As some of the children are finishing high school and are now wanting to go to vocational schools and even university, annual expenditure for tuition is increasing significantly.

All these issues are weighing heavily on Ban Rom Sai and the children. Some children are feeling desperate for their future.

In order to continue our support for these children and help them become independent, Ban Rom Sai is considering adopting the Small Farm project:

Operating a Small Farm - A Natural Farming Project based on 'Sufficiency Economy' Philosophy Theory



There is a well-known Thai philosophy, coined by the current Thai King: 'Sufficiency Economy'. This philosophy implies sustainability, moderation and broad-based development. The King wants Thai people to think about living a moderate, self-dependent life without greed or over-exploitation, particularly of natural resources.

This is the underlying philosophy of these four projects, which have been brain-stormed by our Thai staff.

In short, we want to establish a self-sufficient food source by utilizing the 1,600 square meters of un-utilized land within the Ban Rom Sai compound. This area can be used to grow vegetables and fruit, as well as raise poultry and fish.

- Breed worms and crickets to make good soil for farming and use chicken manure as fertilizer.
- Make a chemical-free farm, based on the natural cycle of the environment.
- Solve waste problem, by collecting waste from the community, to convert into organic fertilizer through composting.

By the methods listed above, the children will learn and practice natural farming (pesticide-free production) using natural resources moderately.

Another goal is to work together with children and families living in the nearby Namphae village, of which the majority live in poverty. Ban Rom Sai has established a good relationship with the village, after educating and giving them better understanding of HIV/AIDS. This has created a stigma free environment for the children and we would like to build on this relationship to help with long-term community development.



Farm site



Vegetable farming started as a pilot project

Small Farm – Proposed Lay-out



- A. Meeting and Activity Room
- B. Barn: chicken farm / egg laying site / land for worms / cricket farm / catfish farming pond
- C. Fruit & Vegetable Patch growing banana trees, pumpkins, beans etc.
- D. Herb Garden: growing herbs, such as lemongrass, galangal, ginger, keffir lime etc.
- E. Fruit Orchard: growing tropical fruits, such as mango, rose apple, jackfruit etc.
- F. Mushroom Farm: farming mushrooms, such as straw mushrooms and shitake mushrooms
- G. Vegetable Plot: growing vegetables that have a short growth period, such as morning glory and lettuce
- H. Storage Area: Area to store organic farming items, such as chicken manure, cow dung (collected from the community) etc.

For the future for children **at Ban Rom Sai and the surrounding community**

Ban Rom Sai has been working on processing and re-using waste through compost, and now we want make a big step towards our long-term goal, to become:

An eco-friendly facility for HIV-infected orphans, whose operation is independent from donations

We are planning to contribute to the environmental improvement of the community through this small farm operation project (such as collecting garbage to make fertilizer).

Also, it is possible to make this farm a job training site, as well as a future workplace not only for Ban Rom Sai children, but also for the people in the community. Especially those that are living in poverty or those who are minorities, with few occupational choices.

This small farm project is set out to support the local community. First, to become a self-sufficient facility and community; secondly, to produce and sell organic crops on a commercial basis. This will go towards creating an self-sufficient and financially independent Ban Rom Sai.

We would like to humbly ask for your financial support, in order to launch this project and work towards making Ban Rom Sai a self-sustaining operation.